

“Do you ride an elephant to school?”

Don't you get irritated when foreigners ask South Africans silly questions such as “Do you ride an elephant to school?” or “Do you have lions roaming in your backyard?” As much as these questions can be incredibly annoying, realising how the rest of the world views South Africa can be humorous. But why do people from other countries think of South Africa as a jungle?



The world's perception of South Africa is greatly influenced by how South Africa presents itself on a global scale by means of destination branding. Destination branding has become an increased research interest as it consists of destination identity and destination image. Destination identity enables a destination to position itself relative to competitors and destination image forms tourists' expectations, which determine tourists' behaviours. Destination branding is important to encourage future revisits from tourists. A tourist destination should appear to be more attractive, and deliver a superior tourist experience compared to alternative destinations.

A recent study by Kelly Summerfield, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), was conducted to determine whether tourists' perceived image and the communicated identity of South Africa predict tourists' behavioural intentions. This study was conducted amongst a sample 155 international tourists.

The study revealed that with regards to destination identity, product offering was a significant predictor of tourists' behavioural intention; whilst supporting environment, attractions and culture were statistically significant predictors of behavioural intentions when considering destination image.

The results of the study shed some light on the importance of improving a destination's image and identity in an effort to generate future revisits or recommendations. Actions to build or improve a destination's image may facilitate revisiting behaviour, which can increase the destination's competitiveness.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's Degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2014 within the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Kelly Summerfield, under the supervision of [Dr. E.A. Kruger](#).